

REMARKS

Claims 4, 5, 7, 8, 13, 16 and 19-26 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-3, 6, 9-12, 14-15, 17-18 and 27-28 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer and claims 4, 7, 8 and 13 are amended to place claims 4, 7, 8 and 13 in independent form. Reconsideration based on the above amendments and the following Remarks is respectfully requested.

I. Priority

The Office Action asserts that foreign priority has been claimed on two documents, Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-397268 filed December 27, 2000 and Japanese Patent Application No. 2001-031103 filed February 7, 2001. Although a Declaration and Power of Attorney for Application of United States Patent claiming priority from Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-397268 was filed on February 5, 2002, Applicant made a typographical error in claiming priority from Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-397268. Therefore, Applicant prepared and filed a substitute Declaration on February 28, 2002 to correct the typographical error by claiming priority from Japanese Patent No. 2001-031103 filed February 7, 2001. Since Applicant withdraws the Claim for Priority to Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-397268 having a December 27, 2000 filing date, Applicant respectfully submits that the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office has received the only priority document (Japanese Patent Application No. 2001-031103) from which priority is claimed.

II. The Claims Define Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action asserts that claims 4, 5, 8, 13, 19, and 21-26 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. However, if these claims were rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, these claims would be in condition for allowance. Applicant has rewritten claims 4, 7, 8 and 13 in independent form. Since claim 5 depends from claim 4 and claims 19 and

21-26 depend directly or indirectly from claim 13, withdrawal of the objection to claims 4, 5, 8, 13, 19, and 21-26 is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication 2002/0032681 to Feldmeier et al. However, claim 16 depends from claim 13, which is now in condition for allowance. Therefore, claim 16 is in condition for allowance for at least the reasons claim 13 is in condition for allowance and for the additional features, which are recited in claim 16.

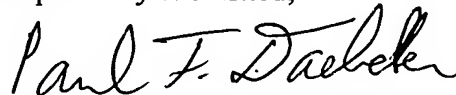
The Office Action rejects claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication 2002/0032681 to Feldmeier et al. in view of U.S. Patent Publication 2003/0093613 to Sherman. However, claim 20 depends directly from claim 16 and indirectly from claim 13, which is now in condition for allowance. Therefore, claim 20 is in condition for allowance for at least the reasons claims 13 and claim 16 are in condition for allowance and for the additional features, which are recited in claim 20.

III. Conclusion

For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 4, 5, 7, 8, 13, 16 and 19-26 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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